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LITTLE INCIDENTS

OF THE

BATTLE OF LEXINGTON, MO.

BY THE

OLD FIFE MAJOR

—OF—

James A. Mulligan's Irish Brigade.

WICHITA:
EAGLE PRESS.
1890.

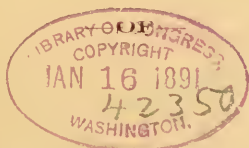
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"L. Skinner

Chas. H. H. H.
H. H. H.
H. H. H.

IN the spring of 1861 I lived in the little town of Panola, on the Illinois Central railroad, about twenty miles north of Bloomington. I had lived there for quite a number of years and was well acquainted for quite a distance around the town. I was very well content to remain there, for I was getting good wages and the work was light.

But when the news of the surrender of Ft. Sumpter reached us the sentiment of the people changed at once, and it was for or against the Rebellion, and that decidedly. Company after company was organizing in different places and I was solicited on every side to join, and refused as often. It was just this way with me: I did not feel quite brave enough to go south and contend with the little dangers that the Johnnies might set up for our benefit; nor was I quite brave enough to stay at home and hear the ladies tell how nice it was to have an able-bodied young man that did not care enough about his country to expose his precious self.

These innocent little words rather chafed me, so I concluded that I would go north as far as Earlville and work at my trade till the war excitement subsided a little. So I started on my way, and while sitting in a seat musing over the ill luck that had sent me away from home the front door of the car opened and in came a fine-looking young man dressed in blue from head to foot. As he came up the aisle he looked on one side, then the other, till he came opposite where I was sitting, and then he bowed very politely and asked permission to share my seat. I granted it by moving over, and he sat down and commenced talking about different things, and finally the conversation led to the prospect of war. He handed me his card and said he was representing a company of infantry then drilling in Earlville.

The name of the company was the Earlville Guards, and it was composed of men of his acquaintance. He knew them to be good, reliable men, and was confident that they would make soldiers that could be trusted. The company was almost complete and was now awaiting an answer from Colonel James A. Mulligan in regard to acceptance in his brigade, located at that time

at Polk street barracks, Chicago. While we were talking we ran into Mendota, where we changed cars, and it was not long till we were in Earlville.

I bade my new friend good-day and went in search of a hotel. I soon found one, and found it full of boarders and travelers. It appeared to me that the whole country was represented in that crowd, and the talk was war! war! war! That kind of talk caused me to leave home. so I left the hotel as soon as I got my dinner and went in search of work.

It was not long until I was employed by the best painter in the place at good wages and I went to work with a will, for I had no idea of becoming a soldier. I had three good reasons in my own mind for not enlisting: 1st. From what I had heard and read I rather thought that war was just a little dangerous. 2nd. I could make as much in five days at my trade as a soldier could make in a month. 3rd. I could go south and fight at any time I had a mind to, but enlisted I could not come home and not fight when I had a mind to. So I worked on for about two weeks, and one Saturday afternoon I concluded I would lay off and go down town and watch the Guards, as they called them, drill. So after I got to the principal part of town I mixed in with a crowd that was sitting and standing in front of a large store, and it was not long till here came the Guards down the street, and just as they came in front of the store the captain brought them to a halt and parade rest; and then he came over to the crowd and said that they had two good drummers but no fifer, and if there was a man or boy present that could play the fife he would give them two dollars out of his own pocket to play that afternoon. I was considered a good fifer, and I told the captain that I would accept his offer if he would furnish the fife. It was not long until I had the instrument, and I took my place at the head of the company, and the captain said, "Attention, Guards! Shoulder arms! Right face! Forward, march!" And away we went down the street to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

After drill was over my late friend, the lieutenant, introduced me to the captain and company. I was very much pleased with both, and they were very anxious that I should become the company fifer. But playing the fife in Earlville, a free man, and playing it down in Dixie, an enlisted man, was quite different, so I begged to be excused for the present.

The citizens of Earlville were very proud of this company, for it was composed of the best young men in the place, so they

went to work and called a meeting and started a subscription paper and raised quite a large sum of money for the purpose of buying a company flag, and this flag was to be presented on the day they left for Chicago.

It was not long until the captain received orders from Colonel Mulligan to report with his company at headquarters, Polk street barracks, Chicago, within ten days. This order struck the boys something like business, and all hands were busy from that time settling up their business at home so they could leave feeling they had done their duty.

On the day that they were to start a large crowd had gathered at the station from the town and country, and when the company marched up and came to a halt a young lady by the name of Morton stepped in front and presented the flag with a few appropriate remarks, and when the flag was unfurled at the head of the company the air was rent with the words, "O Say, Can You See." It was not long until the train came in sight and the tender farewell was heard on all sides.

After the company had left I really felt sad and lonely ; but I went to work with all my might to drive off those sad feelings, and I continued to work for about two weeks. But all this time I could not forget how much all the people appeared to think of the boys that had enlisted, and the ones that stayed at home, if they were thought anything of it was by themselves. It was too much like goods that had gone out of fashion. It did not matter how useful you had been, you were discarded unless you took on the suit of blue. So one day while I was busy painting a buggy in the shop a young man came in that I had become well acquainted with and he showed me a letter that he had just received from his chum that had enlisted in the Guards, and the letter was full of humor and good times.

The regiment was at that time in the old arsenal at St. Louis and had received marching orders, but the letter did not state where they were going. My friend sat there for a long time in deep study, and finally he said :

" Skinner, I will go to St. Louis and enlist in the brigade if you will."

" It's a go," said I, and threw down my brush. " I will go just as soon as I can get transportation."

" Well, that is just a little too soon for me," he replied, at the same time showing me transportation for two.

The disease, or whatever it was, was contagious and I had become a victim. It did not require much time for us to get ready, so on the 10th of July, 1861, we tried government transportation for the first time.

When we boarded the train we found a number of soldiers going to different commands in the south, and when we got to Galesburg they claimed that the conductor did not give them time to finish their dinner, and it was just a little funny to see the roast beef, chicken and biscuit tumble into those haversacks. The landlord remonstrated severely, but the boys told him to keep cool and they would do a little fighting for his special benefit when they got down south, or if he was very anxious they would administer on the spot. He was not over anxious, so they went on their way rejoicing.

We got into Quincy some time before the boat that was to convey us to St. Louis arrived, and my comrade and I thought we would take a little stroll up town to pass away the time. The weather was very hot, and when we returned my comrade was puffing and blowing like a small engine—he only weighed 240—and as we came into the crowd that had already gathered on the wharf, my chum was in the act of sitting down on a trunk when a lady sprang forward and caught him by the arm and said :

“Merciful heavens, man, would you burst my trunk !”

B's countenance lit up with one of those broad grins and he moved forward and seated himself on a rock.

It was not long until the boat arrived, and we went aboard and presented our transportation to the clerk. He rang a bell and soon a young man appeared and conducted us down stairs and to the rear end of the boat, where we found a number of women, men, children and dogs, and it was so crowded that we could not find a seat and we stepped back a few steps and seated ourselves on the floor and leaned back against some oil barrels, and as we took a survey of the deck and its occupants we discovered just across the way from us, leaning up against a barrel with a cob pipe in his mouth, a long, lank, lean-looking individual wholly engrossed in his pipe. We hailed him and wanted to know if he wanted to enlist. He said he was going to St. Louis for that purpose, and when he got awake we found him to be a good talker and full of fun.

When night came on, and the women had stowed their children away in some unseen place, we looked around for some comfortable place to sleep. My chum found a bench and stretched

himself on it, and the tall Iowa man, as we found him to be, stretched himself on the floor near the bench ; and we had all arranged things the best we could and was just about ready to drop off into dreamland when an old negro came in and perched himself up in a bunk over our heads with his 15-inch feet hanging down and commenced on his old banjo, "Dump-a-dump-a-dump-a-dump." The music was not very consoling and did not strike any of us as very entertaining ; but we thought the negro himself would soon tire, so we lay there trying to think of something to kill that doleful sound when we saw the tall Iowa man rise up and crowd himself in behind the bunk, when he gave an unearthly growl, and at the same time caught the negro by the feet with his long, sharp nails. There was one kick and one yell, and down came negro, banjo and all ; and I believe I can say squarely that I never saw real, genuine scares so plainly manifested in any face as it was in that darkey's. You could see the scare on the tips of his ears. After this we all settled down to make up what we had lost in sleep, and it was hard to tell which made the most noise—my fat chum, the tall Iowa man or the engine.

Finally I dropped asleep and do not know just how far I had got, when there came a tremendous crash, and everything was in commotion—women praying, men swearing and children crying. This was caused by the boat running into a sand-bank and throwing us all forward. It came near destroying the harmony on deck, for my chum was thrown off of the bench on to the Iowa man, and he commenced kicking and striking, for he did not understand it, and the 240 pounds that struck the tall Iowa man caused him to kick and strike as though he was at a loss to understand. The awful jolt that the tall man received knocked all the understanding out of him, and we had to keep them apart till we could explain.

The next morning everybody appeared to be out of sorts, and we were all collected around a large stove or range cooking our breakfast, and I do not think I ever saw such a grand display of old, banged-up coffee-pots and disabled frying-pans in all my life, and the smoke or steam that arose from those old vessels were red, white and blue.

One lady had just finished frying a pan of meat and had stepped aside to spread the cloth when a lank-looking dog came up and was just putting his nose in the pan. The husband of the lady was sitting near by, about half drunk, and when he saw

the dog he gave a spring to kick him, and in his efforts to do so he fell and pulled over on him one of those old coffee-pots—hot contents and all. He arose from the floor, caught his pants just above the knees, and held them out from him, and circled around there at a lively rate yelling “Murder!” His wife caught him and tried to soothe him; but it was no use, for he shoved her away, at the same time saying, “Go away, Jennie; you never were under a redhot coffee-pot!”

We finally reached St. Louis, and were conducted to camp, where we found the company. They were glad to see us; but the most of the boys had been used to indoor life, and during their little service they had become badly sunburt, and looked rather rusty. While we were sitting there talking my chum pulled out a plug of tobacco and took a chew; the next man to him said, “Let me try that,” and try was the word. Chum watched the tobacco for a while, and then said, “It may come back the same in quality, but not in quantity.”

After supper the captain came around and presented us with a blanket apiece, and as soon as the bugle sounded lights out, we all rolled ourselves up in our blankets and slept till the bugles from different commands called us up. I received for my breakfast six hard-tacks, a small piece of meat, sugar and coffee. I pounded my coffee on a rock till I broke the grains, and boiled it in a quart cup; the meat I put on a stick and roasted it in the fire. At 10 o'clock we were mustered in service and then my chum and I were conducted to rather a quiet place in camp by a small corporal and instructed in the company drill. It was all new to us, and we were surprised to find how awkward we were. That afternoon there came an order for grand review, and on the account of our awkwardness we were permitted to be spectators. I had never been accustomed to any military display, and I thought it was just immense. General Freemont, Curtice, Hallack and Lions were there, and about 12,000 troops. They formed all the regiments in line, and brought them to front face and parade rest, and then the bands belonging to the different regiments started in on the right and marched to the left, wheeled around and marched back to place of starting, then came the generals down in front and back to center of line, where they stopped and had the regimental officers put their men through the proper drill. After this they broke ranks and each regiment and company went to their quarters, and after they all had got back they made more noise than that many

geese. The next day Colonel Mulligan received orders to report with his regiment to the commander at Jefferson City, Missouri, and it was not long after he received the order till we were stowed away on some platform cars, and the old engine started with her load of human freight. She went meandering around the hills, up and down grade, and all the time giving us the full benefit of a dense volume of coal smoke, and when we arrived in Jefferson City they hailed us as a negro regiment. But the cursing and yelling of the boys soon convinced them different.

After we had removed our traps from the cars we were formed in line and marched up through town and out to the old fair ground, and when we got there we found it had been occupied by city guards, home guards and body guards, and all had left but the body guards, and the ground was just literally covered with them, and so were the boys next morning; and then come little scratch, big scratch, and old scratch. It was a bitter dose, but we all had to take it, and the size of the dose was determined by the size of the man. It was almost impossible for the officers to keep the men in camp while we were at the old fair ground, for water was scarce and it was impossible to cleanse themselves of the vermin without water; so they would run the guard and stay down in the city all day and then most of them come back drunk at night, and they would make the camp hideous till morning. So the sober men got no rest day or night.

Colonel Mulligan was strictly a temperance man, and he issued an order prohibiting any one leaving camp without a pass. This stopped all but the cunning and fearless ones, and then came an order prohibiting any one from bringing any kind of liquor into camp. This restored quiet for a while, till they devised plans to beat the guards. We had one fellow in our company that could and would run the guard, no difference how stringent the order. And he had a practice of misrepresenting everything he said. So those that knew him put no confidence in anything he said, and whiskey he would have, and would bring it into camp in spite of all the orders. One day he went down town and had been on a little tare and concluded he must bring some into camp. So he goes and buys one of those old fashioned coffee pots with a long spout, and he got some beeswax and stopped the lower part of the spout so he could put whiskey in the pot and milk in the spout, and then he starts for camp. When he come to the picket they halted him and wanted to know what he had in his coffee pot. "Whiskey," said he. "Well,

you can't come in here," said the picket. "O, yes I can," said he, and he told the guard to hand him his cup. He did so and he poured out the milk that was in the spout and passed in and got on a regular bender that night.

We stayed in Jefferson City till every hen, turkey, goose and duck in the country would not permit us see them more than once till they were under the house, and the honey and potatoe crop failed on the citizens.

It was late in August when our regiment was ordered to Lexington, Mo., and we had to march through the country. The weather was extremely hot and we made but eight miles the first day and camped in a beautiful grove. It was not long after we halted till the grove was lit up with camp-fires and everybody appeared to be in the best of humor, and we went to bed and slept soundly on the dry leaves.

Camp was all astir next morning at daybreak and we were on the march at 7 o'clock, and by ten o'clock we came to the foot of a small mountain and was making the ascent at a rather slow pace when we came to a place where there was a gradual slope below the road, but on the opposite side it was a bank of rocks straight up and down; and right here we met an old negro and boy driving a yoke of poor old cattle hitched to an old rickety cart loaded with a barrel full of something, we did not know what. The boy was a stout-looking negro, about sixteen years old, and was driving the cattle by a stout rope around one of their heads. They took the lower side of the road, and just as they got opposite Company A the company made a charge on them, and down the hill they went—boy holding on to the rope, plowing up the dirt and gravel with his heels, and the old man standing on the road with his hands on his knees yelling, "Hold them, Jim! Hold them, Jim!" Finally the oxen ran against a tree and smashed up things generally, and the old man said, "I node that nigger foteh 'em up." After this we marched on, not caring how much distress we had caused those poor negroes.

The second day, when we stopped for dinner, one of Company B's men was court-martialed for a gross violation of all law and order. The decision was that his head should be half shaved and then drum him out. After the shaving had been accomplished the regiment was marched out into a wide lane and placed in a line on each side of the lane, and then the prisoner was marched from headquarters to the right of the regiment by a small squad of soldiers at trail arms, and when they got to the

right of the regiment the prisoner was ordered to the front ; then came a file of men at charge bayonet, and the music brought up the rear, and down the line we went to the tune of "Poor Old Soldier." We marched him down the lane, up and over a hill, and bade him good-bye. So he was left in a strange country, alone, with strict orders never to come back to the regiment again.

We broke camp about two o'clock and moved out on a small prairie at route step—every man for himself—when we saw way in advance of us a squad of cavalry. We had no cavalry and we could not account for this ; but we marched on across the prairie and into a heavy grove of timber and camped. Pickets were put out on all the roads with orders to suffer no one to pass. We had ate our suppers and gone to bed, and all was as quiet as the grave, when bang ! bang ! went two guns way down in a deep ravine on the Georgetown road. Every officer was up in a minute and instructing their men to keep quiet, but be ready to act at once. All was quiet again and nothing was heard but the clatter of the horses' hoofs on the Georgetown road ; but this proved to be the officer of the day. He had heard the report and was going to learn the cause. The pickets claimed, next morning, that two or three men horseback were trying to flank them and get into our lines.

We arrived in Lexington the 1st of September and marched into the city, grand open order, knapsack rest—the most favorable way a regiment can present itself. The ladies and children waved their handkerchiefs, but the men made no acknowledgements. One way or the other we marched through the principal streets and up to the old Masonic hall and broke ranks. We found at this place the First Illinois cavalry and about 700 Missouri Home Guards without any means of protection. Col. Mulligan soon took in the situation and summoned Captain Coffey, our civil engineer, and had him draft a plan for defense. It was not long after this until a detail of ten men out of each company was made for fatigue duty, and in a few days we had an embankment six feet high and ten feet wide at the base, and outside of this was a ditch six feet wide and four feet deep ; and to guard against a cavalry charge, we perforated the ground for quite a distance around with holes from one to two feet deep. After this was done the importance of having plenty of water inside the enclosure claimed the attention of the colonel, and he pressed into service every available team, barrels, tubs and pails, and sent

them to the river for water to fill some large cisterns that were there; but just as they were loaded and ready to return a squad of Confederate cavalry came down and cut off our water supply. Teams and all were captured; but they were men that belonged to the city. We slept on our arms that night, but nothing further happened. The next morning the colonel sent out two companies of the First Illinois cavalry to reconnoiter. They took the road leading to the fair grounds and had not gone more than a half mile when they were met by a large force and had to retreat. They came in pell mell and the rebel cavalry in close pursuit. Abe Eli, of Manola, Illinois, was hit with a buckshot in the face, and the blood was all over his face and breast, and when he got inside the works he said, "Did they think they could stop me the way I was coming, with a buckshot? Not much!" After the pickets were all drove in we could see the artillery on three sides of us preparing to notify us of their intentions. They appeared to know that we had no artillery, for the cavalry would show themselves in different places beyond gun shot. We had but one six-pounder and that was kept to guard the main entrance to the fort. About 3 p. m. of the first day we seen a small squad of cavalry coming in from towards town with a white flag. Colonel Mulligan sent a platoon to learn the cause. They soon returned with an order from General Sterling Price for an unconditional surrender of the place. Mulligan looked it over carefully and refused. When they received the answer they went back to headquarters and it was not long till we heard the blast of a bugle on the right; then came one in the center and then on the left. The sound of the last bugle had scarcely died away till crash! crash! crash! came shot and shell from three sides. Who can tell how we felt but the man who has been in his first battle? What made it so bad on us we had no chance to retaliate, for they were beyond musket range, and our orders were not to fire a gun till we seen them coming up over the hill. They did not advance on us that day, but kept up a constant canonading. We had about 800 horses and mules inside the works, and they were exposed to the fire. The horses belonged to the First Illinois cavalry. They were a fine lot. The most of them were horses that the boys brought into the service with them, and it was surprising to see their actions and hear the noise they made. Some of the boys could not stand to see the poor creatures tied there to be shot down, and they sprang out and cut the halters and ropes and then came one of the worst stampedes I ever saw. They went pell-

mell from one side to the other till they were killed or escaped by the openings. Up to this time they had been shelling us, but the infantry and cavalry were closing in on every side, and the musket balls dropped down among us like the large drops of an approaching rain storm. While everything looked so gloomy and dangerous a little thing occurred that caused us all to laugh. We had a little Irishman in our company that had just lately come over and he did not know any more about a gun than I do about a great many things. His gun had been loaded for him at Jefferson City, and how many times after, we did not know; but when the balls were dropping in here and there, Pat seen the need of knowing something about his gun, and he turned to the corporal next to him and said, "Corporal, how do you manage this gun?" He told him to lay it down on the breastworks, take aim at something and pull trigger. He layed it down and looked along the barrel with both eyes open and pulled, and the next we seen of Pat he was in the ditch. Blood streaming out of his face, he rose up on one arm and looked up at us and said, "Can it be possible I got hold of the wrong end of the gun?" "O, no," said the corporal. "You were all right." "Well, what did it do then?" "It kicked you." "Kicked, is it," said Pat. "Well, mark me words, she is no colt at the business." After this there was a lull all along the line under the brow of the hill, and we could hear the officers saying, "Steady, men, steady, men, and then we heard the bugle to charge, and then they came—hip jamboree, still yelling like deamons; but the perforated ground and our continuous firing stopped them, all but one young man on a splendid black poney, who came up to the works, discharged two revolvers and returned without a scratch. How that pony ever made that run over that ground was a mystery to us. After this they came around on the river side and took possession of our hospital. It stood down from the works on the side of the hill. After it was reported to the Colonel he came around to Company A and said, "Captain Gleeson, they have taken our hospital and doctors. Can Company A retake it?" "We can try," said the captain. "Fall in, Company A!" Every man was at his place. "Attention company! fix bayonets! shoulder arms! right face! double quick! march!" and away they went—took it, but could not hold it, and the charge and retreat thinned the ranks of the company badly. Our wounded suffered for the want of water and some of them were almost frantic, and there was no way to help it unless some one would volunteer to go to the nearest spring and

it was inside the enemy lines, and to undertake it was sure death or capture to any man or set of men, and the result would be the loss of the men and no water; but the pleadings of the wounded for water was hard for the men to bear but was more distressing to a young lady that was helping. She caught up some canteens and marched out of the works for the spring as deliberate as though she was going to milk. Every rock and tree concealed a sharp-shooter, but that did not stop that brave girl. She got to the spring and was surrounded by a number of men, and she was detained and held as a prisoner until an officer on a white horse came up and ordered them to let her have the water. When she got back she was completely unnerved, and it was some time before she could tell about her adventure. She said that she told the men she wanted the water for the wounded, and they did not know whether to let her have it or not, and they sent for this officer and he asked who sent her and she said "No one; I volunteered to come, because I could not stand by and hear the wounded plead for water and none to give them." "Take the water and return as soon as you can and tell the wounded that we are not brutes; that we would not deny a wounded soldier a little water." I did not learn who this girl or young lady was, but I think she was a daughter of one of the captains of the Missouri Home Guards. At any rate she was brave and true and should receive some praise.

While we were all waiting for future developments Colonel Mulligan came around on a company visit, and as he stopped just in front of us along came a solid shot, went through two large mules, one wagon, a tent, and passed on its way to the river. From where the colonel and captain were standing it missed them about two feet. The colonel said, "Captain, I think they want us to move on," and he passed on to the next company, and just as he got there the confederates made a charge on that point and came near capturing the company flag. The colonel yelled, "Stick to your colors, boys; if they go, go with them." Now they had tried us at all points and had an idea of our strength and location, and they knew it would be too big a risk to try to take the place by storm, so they went to the landing some distance above the fort and hauled a large number of hemp bales down to the foot of the hill and lashed them together with ropes and poles till they had a protection that no musket ball could penetrate; and then they had them distributed all around on the hillside, and the first thing we knew here they came, fifteen or twenty men to a section of portable breastworks, and all

we could do we could not stop them, for every time they turned them over we got the contents of their guns. Major Becker had command at this point, and we dare not move a man from any other point to reinforce him, for they were closing in on us from all sides. He stayed and contended until he saw it was all for no purpose, and then he surrendered, and after the word surrender passed around they came over that embankment like thousands of wolves, and we did not know but what we would be eaten up at once ; but as soon as they seen us, if they ever had any eating intentions they dismissed them, for we were decidedly the hardest looking Yanks that ever struck old Missouri. Just after the surrender everything was pell mell and confusion. An officer rode up to the colonel and demanded his sword. "Hold!" said General Price ; "if the colonel surrenders his sword it will be to me. Keep your sword, colonel, as a token of my esteem for you and the officers and men with you." We were ordered to stack arms at once, and all government property was taken from us, but private property we were permitted to keep. After we had been disarmed a heavy guard was stationed around camp and we were permitted to go any place within the lines. In place of receiving insult and abuse we were treated just the best kind, and it made us think that the rebs were not such bad fellows after all.

The following morning we were marched down through town, not as we came in. Oh, no ! We came in bold and defiant and went out rag. tag and bobtail. After we crossed the river General Price sent an escort with us out about ten miles, and then we were left to forage on the country for supplies. All the commissioned officers were taken down town the evening of the surrender and we saw nothing more of them until we were exchanged in '62. After we had meandered through the country we came to a little town on the St. Joe & Hanibal railroad by the name of Hamiiton. Here we took a freight train for Quincy, Ill., and when we got there we were surrounded by recruiting agents that were very anxious to have us re-enlist. Our answer to all such fellows was, "We would go home and see what mother said about it."

The adjutant general of the state sent an order to the commander at Quincy to forward us by steam to St. Louis to receive our pay, and while waiting for the boat that was due at 2 P. M. we were lying, sitting and standing in groups on the wharf when a fine carriage came along. The driver jumped down and opened the door and a well dressed lady was helped out. She approached the group where we were sitting and called our attention to a

paragraph in a paper she had in her hand. Before we could read it she said, "Please tell me when he was killed, how he was killed, and where he was buried." It was the announcement of her son being killed in the battle of Lexington. While we were telling her that we knew nothing about it a stripling of a lad stepped out from behind the carriage and but two words were spoken and they were in each other's arms. I believe I never in all my life heard such a heartfelt prayer as that mother rendered for the restoration of her son.

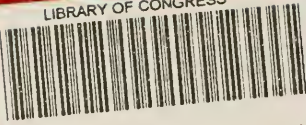
The boat that was ordered to take us to St. Louis was on time and it could not accommodate half the number, so part were sent by rail. We saw nothing more of them until we got into Benton Barracks.

When we landed in St. Louis the majority of our clothing was not there, and we were so embarrassed that we marched through the streets with our caps pulled down over our eyes—as though that would help our looks. We heard an Irish lady say as we were passing, "Where did the ragged robins come from, anyhow?" And another, "Their looks indicate service." But we stalked along until we got to camp, and there we found the 108th Illinois and two or three more regiments that we were acquainted with, and a number of the members went to work and made us a reception dinner and would not let us change our clothing until this was all over. We were the prodigals and they did not feel offended at our display of poverty. After dinner was over and we had a good long talk with our friends General Curtis ordered the paymaster to pay us off as soon as possible. It was not long until we received some thirty dollars apiece to fit us up for home, and when we got down in the city it was just a little amusing to see how those Jews would rig out some of our little duck leg Irishmen with a pair of pants that would fit them around the waist and would have a square eight-inch lap at the end of the leg.

On our way home the people greeted us kindly at every station and we felt repaid for our little service. I reached home about three o'clock in the morning and did not feel like disturbing any one till daylight, so I folded my blanket around me and slept until daylight on the platform. About six o'clock the little village showed signs of human life, and as the day advanced I was surrounded by many friends and relations anxious to know where I had been for four or five months. Up to this time no one at home knew that I had been in the service, and when I related my little experience I received more flattery than I ever did before or since.

THE END.

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